

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY 3, 2011
MINUTES**

Chairman Capes called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall

Members present: Capes, Barringer, Burke Giger, Parent, Perkins, and Wilson

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST – CPC APPLICATION

Selectman Anna Eliot, Town Manager Mark Haddad, and Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) Chairman Colleen Neff met with the Board to request a letter of support for the AHT's application for \$400,000 from the Community Preservation Committee. Mr. Haddad said the AHT would like to invest in a development project at 134 Main Street. The North Middlesex Savings Bank foreclosed on the 5-acre property which includes an historic building. The development will include 10,000 to 14,000 SF of retail space and 15 housing units. Three of the 15 units will be affordable. Mr. Haddad said the Selectmen would like to expand the Station Avenue Overlay District to 134 Main Street. The AHT will receive a return on its investment and will reinvest the funds in other affordable housing projects. The Town is working with the North Middlesex Savings Bank and a development team on the project.

Member Barringer asked if the Bank had foreclosed on the property. Mr. Haddad said, "yes," and added that the proposed project will increase the value of the property.

Member Barringer asked if more than three affordable units could be created. Mr. Haddad said the Station Avenue Overlay District requires that 15% of the units be affordable. He said he would like the Affordable Housing Trust to realize a return on its investment. The Trust would re-invest the funds in other projects that would produce additional affordable units.

Member Giger asked who would own the project. Mr. Haddad said the development team, not the Town, would be the owner.

Member Giger asked about the level of risk involved. Mr. Haddad said he is working with Town Counsel to be sure there is minimal financial risk to the Town.

Member Perkins said she supports the project, but would like to see more than three affordable units.

Member Burke said it is a wonderful concept to bring a mixed use project to the Town. He asked who will sponsor the zoning articles. Mr. Haddad said the Board of Selectmen will sponsor the article and asked if the Planning Board would like to co-sponsor.

Chairman Capes asked about including the property as a Chapter 43D Priority Development Site. Mr. Haddad said it is critical to be able to utilize the expedited permitting process in order to see a return on the investment made by the Affordable Housing Trust.

Member Burke asked if the site is eligible under Chapter 43D since it has less than 50,000 square feet gross floor area. Town Planner Michelle Collette said she spoke with April Anderson of the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office about adding the 134 Main Street to the existing Station Avenue Overlay District. She said she would confirm its eligibility.

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Member Perkins said Community Preservation Funds have been used for similar projects in other towns such as Newton and Manchester-by-the Sea.

The motion was made by Giger, seconded by Perkins, to support the Affordable Housing Trusts application for Community Preservation Funds in the amount of \$400,000 for the development project at 134 Main Street. The motion passed unanimously.

The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Perkins, to encourage the Affordable Housing Trust to maximize the number of affordable units in the project. The motion passed unanimously.

ROCKY HILL PERFORMANCE BOND

The Board received a report dated February 1, 2011 from Nitsch Engineering with a cost-to-complete estimate of \$120,757.46 for Cardinal Lane in the Rocky Hill subdivision. The motion was made by Barringer, seconded by Wilson, to approve the amount of \$120,757.46. Attorney Robert Collins said he would draft a new tripartite agreement for all the roads in the Rocky Hill subdivision.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN DRAFT GOALS

The Board reviewed the list of draft goals from Community Opportunities Group (COG), based upon goals submitted by the Advisory Groups with notes from the Planning Board. COG combined several similar goals on the list. Member Burke said some of the goals should not be combined and should be considered independently. The Board agreed and will ask COG to provide a list of all the goals as drafted by the Advisory Groups. The Board submitted notes on which goals should be considered together at the February 12, 2011 work session.

MINUTES

The Board voted to approve the minutes of October 7, 2010; October 14, 2010; October 21, 2010; November 4, 2010; December 2, 2010; December 9, 2010; December 16, 2010; January 6, 2011; January 13, 2011; January 20, 2011; and January 27, 2011.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Land Use Director/Town Planner

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